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# NEW HAMPSHIRE NATIONAL GUARD STATE PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

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4 Pembroke Road, Concord, New Hampshire 03301-5652

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## **Gov. Lynch Announces Plan to Modernize the NH Army National Guard**

**CONCORD** – Gov. John Lynch unveiled plans today for a comprehensive modernization of the New Hampshire Army National Guard during a press conference this morning at the State House.

Joined by Maj. Gen. Kenneth Clark, Adjutant General of the NH National Guard, and other NH Army Guard commanders, Lynch said that over the next two years, the force structure of the NH Army National Guard will undergo a major reorganization and realignment to make it more relevant to the evolving needs of the State and Nation.

"New Hampshire's National Guard is a key member of our state and nation's defense and emergency response efforts," Gov. Lynch said. "We've seen that in Iraq, Afghanistan, after Hurricane Katrina, and just a few weeks ago during the floods in Western New Hampshire. The National Guard possesses a crucial set of skills and expertise that can be deployed anywhere in the state with short notice: trained personnel, equipment, communications and transportation."

Called "Transformation," the nationwide initiative is a change in the way the Army fights, thinks, develops leaders and approaches its missions. The NH Army National Guard will get new units with capabilities more suited to both state and federal missions, and exchange traditional howitzers for more modern rocket artillery. Units will be repositioned and three under-used armories will be closed, putting the Guard in a better position to respond to State and Federal needs.

"The goal of this transformation is to create units better capable of responding, no matter whether the need is state or federal," Lynch said.

The NH Army Guard's two field artillery battalions will trade their howitzers for rockets, combining to form a High Mobility Artillery Rocket System or HIMARS Battalion. The field artillery brigade will become a Fires Brigade and include a new Signal Company and Support Battalion.

"Converting to a fires brigade enables us to deploy to any location as a single package with all the necessary capabilities," said Clark. "We will have a broader set of skills and equipment which are very aligned to the mission of what the state or nation might ask us to do: move, supply, and communicate. That's key to being relevant."

In addition, the NH Army National Guard's Military Police detachment will expand to a company size element, from a 30-man unit to a 170-man unit split between four armories.

Under the conversion, armories in Woodsville, Claremont and Peterborough will close and the Keene armory will reopen to house a military police platoon.

**(See attachment for a complete list of changes)**

**MORE**

The National Guard is the only branch of the military that has the unique dual mission of providing forces at both the state and federal levels and is the only military service that abides by two Oaths-of-Office, one to the governor and one to the President of the United States.

In the last three years, the NH National Guard has supported combat and peacekeeping operations overseas as well as humanitarian missions in Louisiana and southwestern New Hampshire in the wake of hurricanes and flooding.

“There never has been a more compelling time to begin our transformation,” Clark said.

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